

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

OMB-01 SCCT-01 SY-05 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00 /086 W
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R 120335Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1132

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY SUVA BY POUCH

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPACREP GUAM/TTPI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0016

CINCPACREP PLS PASS TO STATUS LNO SAIPAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, BP

SUBJECT: SOLOMON ISLANDERS RIOT ON SELF-GOVERNMENT DAY

1. THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS REPORTED RIOTING AT HONIARA JAN. 2 A FEW HOURS BEFORE CHIEF MINISTER SOLOMON MAMALONI ANNOUNCED THE COMMENCEMENT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, THE CROWD OF 200 STONED SHOP WINDOWS AS IT MOVED DOWN THE TOWN'S MAIN STREET, AFTER AN ATTEMPT BY MAMALONI AND AN UNIDENTIFIED UNION OFFICIAL TO CALM FEELINGS. THE CROWD WAS HEADING FOR THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE WHEN IT WAS DISPERSED BY POLICE USING TEAR GAS. NO INJURIES WERE REPORTED.

2. DEMONSTRATORS BRANDISHED ANTI SELF-GOVERNMENT PLACARDS. THEY APPEARED TO BE MOSTLY MEMBERS OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS GENERAL WORKERS UNION. AT THE TIME OF THE RIOT, UNION OFFICIALS WERE HOLDING TALKS WITH GOVERNMENT LABOR OFFICERS ON THEIR CLAIMS REGARDING WAGES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND ABOUT GOVERNMENT POLICY AND EMPLOYMENT LAWS.

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3. THE UNION EARLIER MADE POLITICAL DEMANDS TO GOVERNOR

LUDDINGTON WHEN IN THE FIRST WEEK IN DECEMBER 900 MARCHERS PRESENTED A PETITION FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE PRESENT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, APPOINTMENT OF A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT AND A GENERAL ELECTION BEFORE MARCH 1, 1976. THE GOVERNOR (A) SAID HE COULD NOT DISSOLVE THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY IN ORDER TO HOLD A GENERAL ELECTION SINCE THE LAW SHOWED NO GROUNDS FOR DISSOLUTION, (B) STATED THAT THE LAW DID NOT ALLOW HIM TO LEAVE THE POST OF CHIEF MINISTER EMPTY IF A CHIEF MINISTER COULD BE PROPERLY ELECTED, AND (C) REJECTED THE REQUEST THAT THE DATE OF SELF-GOVERNMENT BE PUT BACK.

4. THE UNION NEXT ASSEMBLED IN FRONT OF CHIEF MINISTER MAMALONI'S OFFICE ON DEC. 11, AND WHEN THE ASSEMBLY WAS DECLARED UNLAWFUL, UNION PRESIDENT BARTHOLOMEW ULUFA'ALU CHOSE JAIL RATHER THAN PAY THE K40 FINE.

5. COMMENT: BARTHOLOMEW ULUFA'ALA HAS PROVIDED THE LEADERSHIP FOR DISAFFECTED WORKERS IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS SINCE HIS RETURN FROM PORT MORESBY LAST SUMMER WHERE HE ATTENDED THE UPNG. ULUFA'ALA HAS GONE FAR TOWARD TAKING ADVANTAGE OF LABOR UNREST FOR HIS OWN PURPOSES. HE SEES HIMSELF AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO SOLOMON MAMALONI AND IS WELDING THE DISPARATE UNIONS INTO A UNIFIED TRADE UNION CONGRESS WHICH CAN USE THE THREAT OF GENERAL STRIKES TO EITHER BREAK THE PRESENT ELECTED GOVERNMENT OR FORCE IT TO ACCEDE TO HIS DEMANDS. OLMSTED

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, LABOR UNIONS, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PORTM00016
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760010-0269
From: PORT MORESBY
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760166/aaaacgjr.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <14 SEP 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOLOMON ISLANDERS RIOT ON SELF-GOVERNMENT DAY
TAGS: PGOV, PP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006